



Accion's Channels & Technology (C&T) team is helping to expand financial inclusion through the smarter use of digital technologies and distribution channels. We work with financial institutions and other companies to plan, test, implement, and improve innovative technologies and methods that can reduce the bottlenecks that prevent the growth and scaling of financial services.

Overview

Providing access to financial services can be a challenging and costly activity for any microfinance institution or company. That's why we believe it's essential to leverage innovative channels and technologies so that businesses can more efficiently and effectively provide useful financial services to their current clients and increase their reach to would-be clients who would otherwise remain excluded.

Our Solution

We provide advisory services to our partners and innovative companies to help them plan, implement, scale, and use new client-facing channels and cutting-edge technologies. We are particularly interested in leveraging technologies that provide both companies and their clients with efficiencies and conveniences for managing finances and payments. We aim to push the frontiers of financial inclusion to help provide useful and affordable ways for small businesses to manage money and for people to save, manage loans, get insurance, and process payments – services that can help households pull out of poverty and weather emergencies.

Our Expertise

Collectively, our team has decades of hands-on experience in advisory services, microfinance, banking, social entrepreneurship, and channels and technology – from both the private and nonprofit sectors – in developed and emerging markets. We have a strong track record of increasing consumer adoption of digital financial services and strive to make impacts that benefit overall sector advancement.

Our focus areas include the strategy, planning, development, and implementation of:

- **Digital Financial Services:** agent networks, branchless banking, mobile banking, mobile money, mobile remittances, and payment systems
- **Core Technology Innovations:** cloud-based/SaaS core banking solutions, biometric identification, business intelligence, business process outsourcing, and digital field applications
- **Data Analytics and Online Platforms:** behavioral data, credit scoring, crowd-funding

Channels & Technology

Our Work

Spanning Africa, Asia, and Latin America, our work includes the following sample projects:



Swadhaar FinServe is Accion's partner in Mumbai, India, where we helped implement a strong core banking system and streamline and expand adoption of a mobile banking solution in partnership with India's leading telecommunications provider, Airtel. Swadhaar clients can now conveniently perform a variety of financial transactions through their mobile phone, including loan repayments, domestic remittances, and utility payments. We continue to play a key role in supporting Swadhaar's process optimization, partner relations, and customer education and integration. We also provide strategic advice for resolving issues and testing innovations. As a result, a total of 14,000 women were taught how to use mobile money and perform financial transactions.



Banco Pichincha is one of the oldest banks in Ecuador. We have been working with them since 2011 to develop their agent network channel. We began by conducting a detailed analysis of the different models for implementing an agent network and then designed and implemented the strategy for selecting, monitoring, and incentivizing agents, which included the rollout of digital field applications to monitor the agent network. Banco Pichincha currently has more than 15,000 agents that cover Ecuador's vast geography. In 2014, we completed an agent network diagnostic, identifying risks and service gaps which had been limiting adoption. We then outlined a strategy and activity plan to improve the service, network structure, and apply best practices to drive successful expansion.



Finamérica successfully developed its agent network in Colombia, thanks to our support in the implementation of a biometric authentication system that accelerated client adoption. Among other tasks, our team designed the agents' profiles, delivered training, and created the processes for monitoring and maintaining the network. Today, Finamérica's network includes nearly 300 top-quality agents, mostly recruited from their loyal client base, allowing the institution to reach increasingly remote communities that have limited access to financial services.



Akiba Commercial Bank (ACB) is a full-service bank that serves working families and micro and small to medium enterprises (MSME) in the urban centers of Tanzania, such as Dar es Salaam. We have been working with ACB since 2010, helping them to build a strong ICT and mobile banking platform that, in partnership with an interoperable platform provider, will allow the bank to offer its services nationwide. ACB clients who have adopted the bank's mobile technology have expressed their satisfaction with the convenient and affordable ways to transact, which include making deposits and loan payments, checking balances, and moving money between their accounts and mobile wallets. We are also assisting in the rollout of a biometric solution to provide even more convenience and security to clients.



ZoonA offers a platform for digitizing payments throughout Zambia, supported by a strong agent network. We helped this innovative company diagnose and improve the health of that network and identify how to transform into an aggregator model that can achieve quality scale, a more substantial footprint, and broader geographic coverage. We also helped ZoonA to enhance its digital supply chain by analyzing the actors in the mobile payment ecosystem and the value proposition for each. Based upon consumer and market readiness, as well as organizational preparedness, we also advised and identified roadmaps for piloting a consumer mobile wallet.

Our Team

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